

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SSM-03 IO-13 /072 W
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R 251615Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6324
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3701

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY SEEKS CLARIFICATION ON BEGIN
FROM JEWISH AGENCY

1. HAROLD ROSEN, ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE JEWISH AGENCY, TOLD EMBOFF MAY 24 THAT HIS OFFICE HAD BECOME A FOCAL POINT OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERSHIP WHICH IS EXCEEDINGLY ANXIOUS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE LIKUD VICTORY AND BEGIN'S HARD LINE STATEMENTS. AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF UJA REPRESENTATIVES ON LONG ISLAND, CHAIRMAN LIPSHITZ HAD DECLARED THAT THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY MUST BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON BEGIN TO MODIFY HIS STAND ON TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. OTHERWISE HE MUST FACE UP TO THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH HIS RIGIDITY COULD HAVE ON RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, THE REACTION TO HIS STATEMENT HAD BEEN THAT IT REMAINS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY TO DEFEND THE EXISTENCE AND SECURITY OF ISRAEL AND NOT TO JOIN IN PRESSURING ISRAEL FOR CONCESSIONS.

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2. ROSEN COMMENTED THAT DESPITE THIS DECLARATION, THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONCERN OVER FUTURE CONSEQUENCES WAS AS GREAT AS WAS THE CONCERN HERE IN ISRAEL, EVEN WITHIN THE LIKUD. LEADING MEMBERS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, INCLUDING EHRLICH AND DULZIN HAD ALREADY PRIVATELY EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN TO ROSEN. A MEETING IS SCHEDULED IN JERUSALEM FOR MAY 25 OF JEWISH AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

WITH DULZIN, EHRLICH AND SEVERAL OTHER LIBERAL PARTY AND DMC REPRESENTATIVES. DULZIN WILL CHAIR THE MEETING WHICH IS TO DISCUSS BEGIN'S FOREIGN POLICY POSTURE AS WELL AS THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS ILLNESS. DESPITE REASSURING MEDICAL BULLETINS, THERE IS WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT BEGIN'S HEALTH CONDITION MAY ACTUALLY BE MORE SERIOUS THAN INDICATED. THE MAY 25 MEETING WILL ALSO BE ATTENDED BY POLLSTER HANNOCH SMITH, WHO IS TO PROVIDE AN ELECTION ANALYSIS.

3. ACCORDING TO ROSEN, THE MORE DOVISH LEADERS OF THE LIKUD WANT TO DOCUMENT TO BEGIN THAT THE ELECTION RESULT WAS PRIMARILY A BACKLASH REACTION TO LABOR'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY, BUT DID NOT REFLECT AN ENDORSEMENT OF HERUT'S RIGID POLICY ON PEACE AND TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS.

4. HANNOCH SMITH TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT DURING HIS POLLING, MOST OF THE RESPONDENTS RATED FOREIGN POLICY RATHER LOW AMONG THE REASONS WHY THEY OPPOSED THE ALIGNMENT. WHILE SAYING THAT SOME OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRONOUNCEMENTS ON BORDERS AND THE PALESTINIANS DID NOT HELP THE ALIGNMENT, SMITH CLAIMED THAT THIS AT BEST HAD BEEN A MARGINAL FACTOR IN THE SUBSTANTIAL SHIFT OF VOTES, WHICH HE MAINTAINS OCCURRED ONLY DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE ELECTION.

5. BOTH ROSEN AND SMITH CLAIM THAT, GIVEN BEGIN'S PERSISTENCE ON HIS HARD LINE FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE DMC IS NOT LIKELY TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION. ROSEN ALSO THOUGHT THAT BECAUSE OF BEGIN'S POSITION ON THE TERRITORIES, DULZIN MAY NOT WANT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, EVEN IF IT IS OFFERED TO HIM, AS HAS BEEN RUMORED BY SEVERAL ISRAELI PAPERS. INSTEAD HE IS MORE LIKELY TO ASPIRE TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE JEWISH AGENCY, WITH GOOD CHANCES TO BE ELECTED.

6. COMMENT: SMITH, AN AMERICAN TRAINED PUBLIC OPINION POLLSTER AND STATISTICIAN (TEL AVIV 3139) APPARENTLY CONTINUES TO ENJOY CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT HIS POLLS CONSISTENTLY HAD SHOWN THE ALIGNMENT DOING BETTER THAN HAD MOST OTHER POLLING SERVICES. IN THE END HIS LIKE MOST OTHER POLLS WAS WAY OFF. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS HE ADMITTED HIS PRO-LABOR BIAS, BUT IS NOW ENGAGED IN A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF VOTING BEHAVIOR AND MOTIVATION. LEWIS

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